

## WARNINGS

Do not put any fluids or solutions into the catheter unless recommended by your nurse or doctor.

Do not allow anyone to stick a needle into your arm at or above where the line enters your skin. This could result in the line breaking and floating towards your heart.

Do not allow blood pressures to be taken on the arm that the line has been inserted into.

Do not use excessive force to flush the catheter. Call your nurse or doctor if it does not flush normally. Always use a syringe that is at least 10 milliliters in size. Small syringes may allow too much pressure and may break the line.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Can I bend my arm with a PICC line in place?

- Yes, there is limited restriction to arm movement with the catheter in place. It is made of flexible plastic material that bends with your arm. You should avoid vigorous arm exercises like weight lifting as it increases the risk of vein soreness.

### How can I shower and keep the PICC line dry?

- The PICC line dressing is waterproof and if sealed around the edges shouldn't allow water to creep under the dressing. However, you should cover the PICC site with a plastic wrapping as added protection during your shower. Examples are: cut the end out of a plastic bread bag to make it a tube and put your arm through the bag so it covers the PICC dressing. Then seal the

upper and lower ends of the bag with a household rubber band. Sealing the upper and lower ends of the bag with tape is also helpful. **NEVER SUBMERGE THE PICC DRESSING UNDER WATER.** If the site under the dressing does become wet after the shower, it should be changed within a few hours.

### Can I eat and drink before having my line inserted?

- Yes, generally only local anesthetic is used to numb the insertion site. However, some children require sedation to place the PICC line. Your nurse or doctor will inform you if you need to not eat or drink before the line is placed.

### Can I play sports?

- Sports such as tennis and golf (sports that require you to move your shoulder multiple times) or vigorous gym exercises are discouraged. There is a risk that your PICC could become dislodged because of excessive upper body movement. However, there are many other pursuits which are acceptable. If in doubt ask your nurse or doctor.

### Can I go on vacation?

- Please talk to your doctor before planning a trip. It is possible to vacation at home and abroad with a PICC line in place. However, you need to consider the type of treatment you are having, the duration and destination of your vacation, and whether you have someone to help care for your PICC line. If you do travel by air, carry all medications in your carry-on luggage.

**If you have any other concerns, contact your personal physician or call Mark Bertoch at (435)725-7405. You may also call the Emergency Room at (435)725-2026.**

# PICC & MIDLINE HANDBOOK

Information for You  
& Your Family



Uintah Basin  
Healthcare

## WHAT IS A PICC LINE?

PICC stands for Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter. A PICC is a long thin tube made of a very flexible plastic. A PICC is used to deliver medication, or IV fluids into your blood stream, much like the small IVs you may have had in the past. A PICC catheter however is much longer (generally 20-22 inches in length, depending on your body size). The PICC line is inserted in one of the veins in your arm, and is then threaded up to the larger veins of your chest (known as the central venous system). This central location of the catheter tip allows it to stay in place for months, and makes it possible to administer very powerful medications without irritating your veins. In addition, you can have blood drawn from the line for lab tests, so you are able to avoid multiple needle pokes associated with routine blood draws. In most cases it will be the only IV catheter you will need to complete your current therapy.

## WHAT IS A MIDLINE CATHETER?

A Midline catheter is exactly like a PICC, except it is generally about 8 inches in length, and is used for shorter periods of time (i.e. therapies that last less than 14 days).

## WHY DO I NEED A PICC?

Reasons your doctor may order a PICC include:

- You will need IV therapy for longer than six days.
- You will need home IV therapy.
- You are being given irritating IV medications that cause your veins to fail quickly.
- You have very few accessible veins for IV therapy.

## HOW IS THE PICC INSERTED? WILL IT HURT?

The nurse will clean the insertion site with an antiseptic, and then numb the area with Lidocaine (a type of anesthetic medication, also used for stitches). A small amount of stinging is associated with Lidocaine injections. However, after this medication begins working you should only feel pressure and some tugging throughout the remainder of the procedure. The line is then secured in place with a locking device to keep it from being pulled out. A gauze dressing is placed over the catheter and covered with a breathable, transparent plastic film that sticks to your skin like tape. A short portion of the tube sticks out from the dressing with 1-2 ports that are used to administer your medications or fluids. If you receive a PICC line, an x-ray will be performed afterwards to confirm correct positioning of the tip of the catheter. If you have a MIDLINE inserted, you will not need an x-ray. The entire procedure takes about 40-60 minutes.

## HOW DO I CARE FOR A PICCLINE, OR MIDLINE?

**Dressing Changes:** You will need to have your dressing changed on a routine basis by a nurse.

You should have your first dressing change completed within 24 hours of having the line placed. Then the dressing should be changed every 5 days. However, you may have circumstances that require you to have your PICC line dressing changed more often.

Some of these instances include:

- A bloody dressing
- A dressing that has become wet
- A dressing that has become loose
- A dressing that has become wet from perspiration and is now coming loose

If you have been instructed by your nurse or physician to change the dressing yourself, you can then obtain the needed supplies from Home Care Services located at 26 West 200 North in Roosevelt, Utah. You may call them at (435) 722-2418 with any questions.

## Flushing:

If you are going to be flushing your own line, your nurse will give you instructions for flushing before leaving the hospital, or on the day you have the line placed. You can purchase the needed items from either UBMC Pharmacy or your Pharmacy of choice (you will need a prescription from your doctor for these items).

## Things to watch for and what to notify your nurse or doctor about include:

- Redness
- Streaking
- Swelling
- Bleeding at the insertion site
- Drainage from the insertion site.
- Pain at the insertion site or along the length of your arm.
- Sudden onset of chest pain or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Breaks, holes, or leaking in the catheter
  
- If the line is pulled out partially (DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PUSH THE LINE BACK IN).
  
- If the line is pulled out completely (Apply pressure to the insertion site until bleeding stops. DO NOT THROW AWAY THE LINE; CALL THE NURSE OR DOCTOR TO REPORT THE LENGTH OF THE LINE.)

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EVERY PERSON, EVERY TIME.